



TADORNA RADJAH, *Eyton.*

Radjah Shieldrake.

Anas Radjah, Duperrey, Voy. de la Coquille, p. 602.—Atlas to ditto, pl. 49.

Tadorna Radjah, Eyton, Mon. of the Anat., p. 106.

White Duck, Residents at Port Essington.

Co-m'ér-do, Aborigines of Port Essington.

THIS beautiful Shieldrake is found in numerous flocks on all the lakes and swamps of the northern and eastern portions of Australia; like the other members of the genus, it frequently perches on trees and resorts to the hollow branches and boles for the purpose of breeding, the young being removed to the water by their parents immediately after they are hatched. When the rainy season has set in, and the water of the lakes has become too deep for them to reach the roots of a species of rush upon which they feed, they become much more scattered over the face of the country, and are then to be seen wading through the mangrove bushes and over the soft mud left by the receding tide, the surface of which affords the bird an abundant supply of food, consisting of crabs, mollusks, and other marine animals. The sexes present no visible difference in their colour or markings, nor is there a sufficient difference in size to distinguish the male from the female.

Head, neck, breast, abdomen, flanks, wing-coverts, inner webs and tips of the outer webs of the secondaries white; band across the breast and upper part of the back rich deep chestnut, which colour gradually passes into the deep dull black of the scapularies, tertiaries, back, rump and tail; feathers of the centre of the back finely freckled with chestnut; outer edges of tertiaries rich reddish chestnut; wing-coverts crossed near the tip of each feather with a narrow, irregular line of black; speculum, or base of the outer webs of the secondaries, rich, shining, bronzy green, between which and the white tip is a broad line of dull black; primaries and spurious wing black; lower part of the flanks and under tail-coverts dull black freckled with white; irides yellowish white; bill and legs reddish flesh-colour, with in some specimens a bluish tinge.

The Plate represents a male and female about the natural size.